

What women want 7

A recent survey shows that although Belgium scores well when it comes to ease of starting a small business, there is still a long way to go before the needs of female entrepreneurs are met



Rodenbach's Bruges 8

We look at the life of Georges Rodenbach, author of the novel *Bruges-la-Morte*, who made the town famous more for its gloom than for its charm



Old and new unite 10

Tribal African statues line up against a backdrop of modern city photographs: just a sampling of what you'll see at the *GEO-Graphics* display, part of Bozar's Visionary Africa festival



#138

Art on the edge



© Dierck Telemans

Thanks to two institutions that took a chance on a neighbourhood, Van Volxemlaan is becoming a cultural Mecca

SAFFINA RANA

Just a few years ago, tree-lined Van Volxemlaan in the Vorst commune of Brussels was peppered with derelict housing and factories. But go down to the avenue today, and you'll find a slew of renovations and a thriving artistic community.

Much of it is down to Wiels, the centre for contemporary art that persevered with four gruelling years of renovation to make its home in the abandoned Wielmans-Ceuppens

brewery at number 354. Wiels has made a name for itself all over the globe, hosting the work of internationally renowned contemporary artists, such as Mike Kelly and Felix Gonzalez-Torres since it opened in 2007.

Not only is Wiels one of the most significant artistic moves onto the road, it's also one of the largest. A rare example of industrial modernism and art deco, the four-storey concrete monolith is visible for miles on the Brussels skyline,

particularly from trains pulling in and out of South Station.

But before its arrival, few of the Wiels creatives knew Van Volxemlaan. Devrim Bayer, co-ordinator of the resident artists program at Wiels, was born in Brussels. "I grew up in Elsene and Ukkel and went to school in Etterbeek, but until I started working here, I didn't know Vorst at all," she says. "There wasn't much to do or visit, so if you didn't live here, you just wouldn't

come here. Wiels has changed that." We sit sipping espresso in the light, airy cafe at Wiels, flanked by the brewery's original copper vats in the entrance hall. A large group of art school students at adjacent tables are in fervent discussion. Two young professionals in suits peer over a folder at another table. The buzz of chatter is momentarily broken by a crocodile of primary school children entering the building.

► *continued on page 4*

Students hitchhike to Barcelona

There are not many things that would get a student out of bed at eight in the morning, but perhaps a free trip around the world is one of them. That's the main prize that last week drew 300 students in Ghent to the starting line of the Route du Soleil hitchhiking competition, organised by students with sponsorship from the university. In seven stages, teams of young people will compete to reach the next checkpoint, with the finishing line in Barcelona. Whoever makes it first wins a world tour.

There are a number of rules: students are only allowed to take a lift in a Belgian car during the

first stage – Ghent to Paris – to avoid them simply calling up Daddy for a ride all the way to Barcelona. They can only take one ride per car, and all lifts have to be logged on the lift card. In return, the organisers have organised a place to spend the night at each of the stops along the way. There are also barbecues and DJs who accompany the convoy. To ease the anxieties of parents, there's an emergency number to call if anything goes wrong, and someone from the crew will come running. Some parents are less anxious than others. "Of course you hear negative stories," said one mother,



Smears grow as Cardinal questioned

Conspiracy theorists gear up

ALAN HOPE

There is one place in Belgium where Cardinal Godfried Danneels can still feel appreciated: inside the Sint-Salvator Cathedral in Bruges, where last Saturday the Cardinal, formerly the primate of the Catholic Church in Belgium, was given a standing ovation by a congregation come to witness the installation of Jozef De Kesel as the new bishop of Bruges.

De Kesel replaces the disgraced Roger Vangheluwe, who resigned after admitting he had sexually abused a family member over a period of years. That blow is still felt

dropping off her 21-year-old son. "But you're better off not thinking too much about that. I used to hitchhike fairly often, and nothing ever went wrong."

The rankings were due to be

among the faithful in Bruges, but their shock has since spread to the rest of the Catholic congregation in Belgium, thanks to growing concern that the Cardinal himself may have knowingly covered up cases of sex abuse by clergy. Last week Cardinal Danneels, by prior arrangement, was brought to the prosecutor's office in Brussels for questioning on what he knew about cases of abuse and when he knew it.

► *continued on page 3*

OFFSIDE

Gas is no laughing matter



© shutterstock

It was invented in 1772 as an anaesthetic, and some people these days use it as a hallucinogen, but for the prosecutor's office in Ghent, it's no laughing matter. Last week a man was picked up during the Rakhti Dei trance music festival in Doornzele in possession of a number of small phials which on examination turned out to contain nitrous oxide (NO₂) or laughing gas. The man was suspected of intent to sell the gas, but despite being caught red-handed, the trouble is that nobody knows if that's against the law.

Nitrous oxide, for sure, is used as a recreational drug. It produces an anti-anxiety effect, leading on to euphoria and hallucinations, through flooding the brain with dopamine, the neurotransmitter associated with pleasant feelings. Initially confined to the health-care professions, where doctors, dentists and nurses were known to become dependent on the substance, it has now moved out into the mainstream. Prolonged use can lead to vitamin B12 deficiency, nerve damage, reproductive disorders and pregnancy defects.

"The gas is legal to buy," explained a spokesman for the prosecutor's office, "but since it is mainly used for paramedical purposes, a number of licences are needed, including a licence to transport it."

Those purposes include dentistry, where NO₂ is used to kill pain while the patient remains conscious; in cases of emergency treatment in heart attack, childbirth or trauma; as food additive E942, for example to make whipped cream in an aerosol; as a propellant for cooking spray; pumped into bags to keep potato chips fresh; in racing cars (and the aeroplanes of the Luftwaffe) to improve fuel output; and as an oxidiser in rocket motors.

The substance is legal for all of those purposes in Belgium, and there is no law to restrict possession for recreational consumption. However, as in Britain, it may be possible to prosecute the sale of NO₂ to others under some sort of trading or licensing regulation. The Ghent prosecutor was due this week to appoint an expert to examine the current legal situation of NO₂.

ALAN HOPE

Don't forget

Get the news from Flanders online in English and French at www.flanderstoday.eu



FLANDERS TODAY
JULY 14, 2010

News in brief

Belgium is losing ground as a favourite destination for **Dutch holidaymakers**. Last year, the number of Dutch visitors on short breaks fell from 1.1 million to one million, or 29% of Dutch holidaymakers. At the same time, the number of longer stays fell to only 6% of Dutch holidaymakers. Germany is now the favourite destination for short stays, while France remains on top for longer breaks.

A man accused of trying to **lure two children** into an apartment in Blankenberge last week has been arrested following a flood of tips to the police. The man tried to get the two girls, both aged eight, to follow him into the building to see a kitten. One of the girls raised the alarm, and the man fled. Following the release of an artist's sketch and a description of the man, he was spotted on a train travelling from Antwerp to Ostend and arrested when the train stopped in Bruges.

N-VA party president Bart De Wever last week delivered his findings on the possibility of **forming a government** to the king, reporting "convergences on various points". Elio Di Rupo, the leader of the French-speaking socialists and thought by many to be De Wever's likely coalition partner, was appointed by the king to take the first steps toward forming a coalition.

Screening for **breast cancer** in women over the age of 40 could do more harm than good, the Federal Health Care Knowledge Centre has said. About 800,000 women every year, including one in five of all women between 40 and 49, are invited to undergo a mammography.

But while systematic screening helps prevent about 24 cancers a year, the radiation can lead to 40 new cancers and 16 other fatal conditions. In addition, the discovery of a number of other less serious lesions can give rise to anxiety and unnecessary medical treatments.

For the first time since the world exposition of 1958, **foreign police** are patrolling the streets of Brussels. Until the end of July, two Spanish, two French, one Dutch and two Luxembourg officers will patrol in and around the Grote Markt in Brussels, as part of the city's contribution to the Belgian presidency of the EU. The officers will only be able to intervene in cases where a crime is actually in progress.

Supermarkets Colruyt and Okay will stop selling **pork from castrated pigs** at the end of the year, following rising criticism of the process of castrating piglets without the use of anaesthetic. The supermarkets will instead sell meat from pigs vaccinated with Improvac, which lowers the levels of testosterone in male pigs. Animal rights organisation Gaia said the decision was "the beginning of the end" of the practice.

FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

Jason Callewaert

It's the dream of every rock fan. You are singing along with your favourite band and then suddenly you are asked to take the stage in front of thousands of adoring fans. Jason Callewaert lived the dream at this year's Werchter festival earlier in the month. No need to take the stage, because his face was on huge screens on both sides. He made such an impression that the video of his performance made it to Canvas, then onto YouTube. As *Flanders Today* went to press this week, the clip had been viewed by more than 70,000 people.

Jason is 19 and comes from Bruges. He's a big fan of the British rock band Editors, having seen them 15 times in five countries, and by the looks of it, he knows all of the words to all of their songs. As the band was performing an acoustic version of the plaintive ballad *No Sound but the Wind*, the cameras caught him singing along, matching Editors' front man Tom Smith all the way for emotional intensity. So much



so that while the people around Jason appear to be transfixed by his performance, he's not even aware he's onscreen.

The audience seem to have loved it: as he told *De Krant van West Vlaanderen*, "Somebody just came up and gave me a drinks ticket, and a girl asked on behalf of her friend if she could give me a kiss." He now, like every trend and passing fad, has his own appreciation society on Facebook.

The band was equally impressed. After seeing the video on YouTube, somebody from the record company

got in touch for permission to feature him in the official video for the single, due to be released soon.

"Really impressive," Jason commented. "And they also promised I would get a gift from Editors." Jason has a suggestion for what that might be: "I'm also a guitarist with the band Foetal Void. If they want to give me something, maybe they could let us be their supporting act."

Watch Jason's heartfelt performance on YouTube under "fan going crazy during Editors @ Rock Werchter"

FLANDERS TODAY

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Pool pass

The government is considering introducing passes for visitors to open-air swimming pools to reduce the problems caused by hooligans. Last week De Lijn stopped picking up and dropping passengers at Hofstade near Mechelen as a result of rampaging youths



© shutterstock

Investigation of abuse investigation launched

→ *continued from page 1*

A commission set up by the Church to look into abuse allegations amassed, before it was closed down, a pile of some 450 dossiers of abuse complaints. In many cases, victims alleged the Cardinal had been informed at the time or later. Danneels claims he never engaged in any sort of cover-up. The purpose of last week's questioning was to find a way through that apparent muddle. The Cardinal was questioned for ten hours in all. He was not accompanied by a lawyer, although he had initially asked if he might need one. He was being questioned, officially, as a witness, and not as a suspect in any sense. Nevertheless the length of the interrogation led to a feeling something more was going

THE WEEK
IN FIGURES

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13	932	0	
004154			
301	661	9	
84	246	FREE	7

46%

of people use the car for journeys of less than three kilometres, according to figures presented by mobility minister Hilde Crevits. Two out of every three trips are made by car, and only 5% by public transport

6

Belgian companies feature in this year's Fortune Global 500 list. They are Dexia, InBev, Delhaize, KBC, Ageas (formerly Fortis) and the Nationale Portefeuillemaatschappij. Dexia ranks highest at 49. Number one on the list is Wal-Mart

€30 million

invested by Chinese hotel group HNA in the Sodehotel in the Brussels commune of Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe. Formerly owned by the Belgian national airline Sabena, the new Tangla Brussels will be turned into the region's most luxurious hotel, open by early 2013

20

members of the right-wing BBET group will be tried in Dendermonde on charges of racism, arms dealing, possession of weapons and belonging to a terrorist organisation, a court ruled last week. Four other men will not face trial, and a fifth has died since the investigation began

?

the number of inhabitants of Belgium, according to the General Directorate for Statistics and Economic Information. The agency is adapting its computer system to meet with international guidelines, so, for the time being, the population of Belgium is unknown

on, as did the fact that at one point he was placed in confrontation with child psychiatrist Peter Adriaenssens, who chaired the ill-fated commission, and who had personally taken testimony from abuse victims who claimed the Cardinal knew what was going on. Anyone who was in Belgium in the years 1996-1998 will agree with justice minister Stefaan Declerck that "We are living through a period of catharsis just like the summer of Dutroux," referring to the hysteria surrounding the case of child rapist and killer Marc Dutroux and the events that followed Danneels' questioning. First it was revealed that police had found a pornographic image of a child on the Cardinal's computer. Then it was claimed he was also in possession of autopsy photos of two of Dutroux's victims.

The two claims were intended to be damning evidence of collusion with abusers or worse. Neither turned out to hold any water. The "pornographic" image, in the first place, was in fact part of a series of photos entered by artist Laura Baudoux in the Canvascollectie art competition organised by the Flemish public broadcaster, and most likely came onto Danneels' computer without his knowledge, simply as a result of his visiting their website.

The autopsy photos, meanwhile, were either sent to the archbishopric in Mechelen by the Vatican, which had received them from a now-defunct English magazine; or they had been sent (as the Church itself claimed) by one of a trio of eccentric conspiracy theorists who hover at the edges of



© Belga

Cardinal Danneels, left, arrives at the Justice Palace in Brussels

the justice system and believe, for example, that Dutroux's victims in fact died in the making of a snuff movie, at a shoot attended by 12 senior figures in the Belgian establishment.

How the Church (the images were not on Danneels' own computer) came into possession of the files is of small importance, odd as it may sound, given that at the height of the Dutroux affair, the DVDs containing the case files were being widely circulated, even before the trial, among journalists, members of the white committees, and other interested parties. As the lawyer who defended Dutroux at his trial pointed out last week, it would be easier to draw up a list of people who did not at some time have possession of all or part of the Dutroux dossier – up to and including autopsy photos. As the conspiracy hype grows, however, there was one new development which might be of concern: the pros-

ecutor-general of Brussels, Marc de le Court, has asked the relevant judicial authorities to look into the investigation of magistrate Wim De Troy, which led to the search of the Mechelen archbishop's palace and offices, and the seizure of two trucks worth of documents, computers and other possible evidence.

The request is perfectly legal, if unusual at such an early stage in the proceedings and in the absence of any obvious signs of impropriety. But legal or not, it has aroused suspicion that one faction within the judicial system more sympathetic to the Church may be in conflict with another more secular-minded faction. There's nothing concrete on which to base that belief, but this is Belgium, and as we've seen before, in Belgium, even a lack of evidence can be taken as proof of something. ♦

Di Rupo moves closer to PM job

N-VA leader Bart De Wever last week completed his mission of carrying out an initial round of exploratory talks with other party leaders and other senior figures, with a view to forming a coalition to govern the country. De Wever was given the job by the King after the spectacular gains made by his party of Flemish nationalists in the June election. The exact contents of De Wever's report are not revealed, but he made it clear he had found "a degree of convergence" among the main parties on the major questions of state reform and reform – or the lack of it – of the social security system. There are those who want both, and there are those who want neither. The camps are split along language as well as political lines. In between, there

are those who want one without giving away too much ground on the other. In the main, though, the parties all know that some compromise is going to be necessary if the country is ever to achieve anything like political stability. "We can talk about the fact that the different points of view are moving closer together, but if I get into details now," De Wever said, "any convergence is going to vanish like snow in the sunshine." The King's next move was to appoint French-speaking Socialist leader Elio Di Rupo as "preformateur", to carry out even more exploratory talks. Di Rupo's party is the biggest on the other side of the language lines, and despite their ideological differences, he and De Wever are expected to form the basis for the

eventual coalition, with Di Rupo most likely the first Walloon prime minister since the 1970s.

His function is a new one on the Belgian scene, where it is customary to have an "informateur" like De Wever followed by a "formateur" who actually forms the coalition. After the 2007 elections failed to achieve a consensus, Herman Van Rompuy was brought in as "verkenner" or "scout" – the first time that term had ever been used. Now the King has extended the political vocabulary even further by naming Di Rupo as "preformateur". The job, regardless, appears now to be the same as it always is: talk to everyone until a result is achieved. ♦

Clijsters gives it her best shot

Kim Clijsters won the dubiously named 'Best of Belgium' clash with Wimbledon champion Serena Williams in front of a record 35,681 crowd at the Koning Boudewijn Stadium in Heizel in Brussels. The match, tied in with Belgium's presidency of the European Union, surpassed the previous record for a crowd at a tennis match – 30,472, set in 1973 in Houston for the 'Battle of the Sexes' between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs. Clijsters was initially due to play Justine Henin, but when Henin injured her elbow, Williams stepped in. Buoyed by her home crowd, Clijsters won the exhibition match – umpired by Martina Navratilova – 6-3 6-2. ♦



© Belga

FIFTH
COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

That bridge again

An old truth in Belgian politics is that the Flemish regional government is much more stable than the federal government (a hotbed of disputes and permanent culture clash). The Flemish government works almost like a company, with hardly any disagreement. It was always a beacon of stability, almost as if to illustrate the Flemish belief that "the things we do ourselves, we do better".

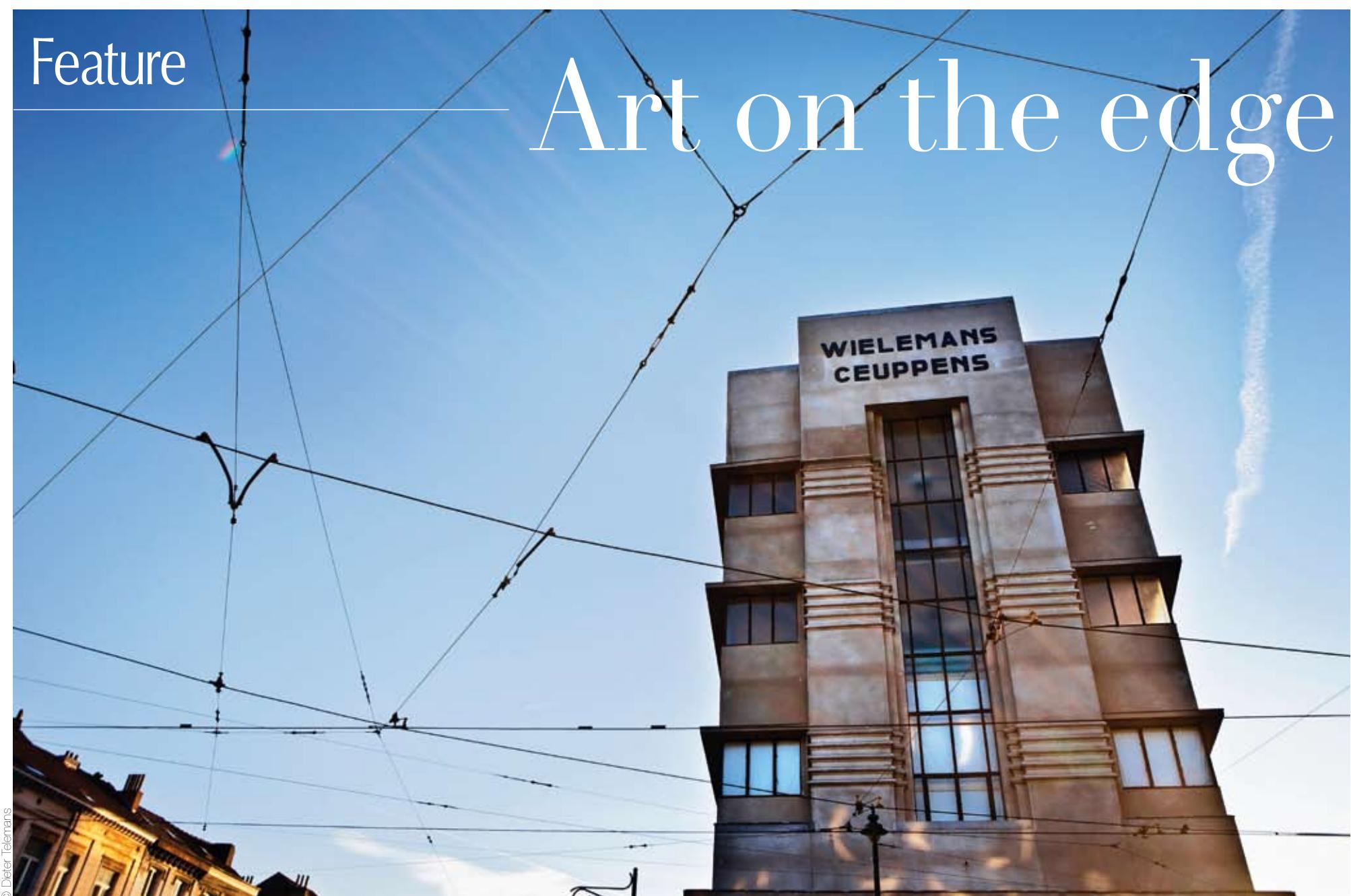
The federal elections, however, have upset the political balance between the coalition partners – CD&V, N-VA and SP.A. The nationalist N-VA, which used to be relatively small, has grown to become Flanders' number one party. This strengthens its position and boosts the confidence of its Flemish ministers Geert Bourgeois and Philippe Muyters.

Ironically, both resigned last week, so they could take the oath as members of the federal parliament, only to be sworn in again as Flemish ministers the next day. The party president Bart De Wever, a Roman scholar, has so far failed to come up with one of his famous Latin quotes to explain away these sudden career changes.

The Christian Democrats (CD&V), meanwhile, suffered huge losses in the federal elections and now look to Flemish minister president Kris Peeters (CD&V) for leadership. Peeters, too, will be the final judge of a federal agreement on state reform. The socialist SP.A still runs a (small) risk of being left out of the federal government, not a happy prospect. Moreover, the Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens (SP.A) feels threatened by the immense popularity of his fellow Antwerpener De Wever.

Aside from all these tactical matters, there is also an issue that looms on the horizon. In March, the Flemish government came up with a so-called "double conclusion" on the divisive issue of the Antwerp Oosterweel crossing. To the great relief of the socialists, it opted for a tunnel rather than a viaduct. Unless, that is, a tunnel proves to be too difficult or too expensive to build. By the end of the summer, a final decision based on studies is expected. The word is that the socialists are becoming nervous at the possible outcome of the studies. Anything but a tunnel would be a major defeat for SP.A and Patrick Janssens, who played a vigorous part in the Antwerp referendum on this matter. CD&V and N-VA on the other hand were never fans of the tunnel scenario.

That means there may be some stormy weather ahead for the Flemish government. Did anyone mention a bridge over troubled waters?



© Dieter Telemans

Van Volxemlaan has become more appealing to newcomers than to long-time residents

► *continued from page 1*

It's a multi-cultural neighbourhood, and the education department at Wiels launches projects between Belgian artists and local Flemish and French schools, enabling children to try different art techniques and foster an acceptance of each other's backgrounds.

"The children are very at ease with Wiels, but if you ask whether their parents have come in, they've never stepped inside, not even for a coffee. Even if they live next door," says Bayer. She doesn't know why. "I can't say how they think, but I know they're not coming. Even if their kids are." Some of the reasons become apparent chatting to people on the avenue. "I'm glad they saved the building. It lifts the area," says Ana-Maria, a woman in her 60s who came to live in the neighbourhood from Italy, as a child. But she hasn't been in. "I can make a coffee at home," she says. "But do they have Monet? I like Monet."

The same goes for the younger generation. "It's a cool building, but I didn't know it was an art gallery," says Siham, one of two local 15-year-olds. "Is it free? Can anyone go?" asks her friend Fatima.

I get talking to the girls outside the Wiel's showcase for young artists on the nearby Sint-Denijsplein – an empty 1960s launderette called Speedy Wash. An installation can be seen through the window and a photographic collage of supermarket check-out counters sits on the outer wall, peeling at the corners.

The girls are not very impressed with the work on show, by Stephanie Kiwitt and Tina Schulz. "It's quite ugly" says Fatima. "Is there a meaning to it? The place still looks abandoned, which doesn't add anything much to the appearance of the area."

"I would rather see art that is beautiful, that makes me smile, that makes people in the area smile," adds Siham. "I like photography a lot. Some large portraits would work really well in this space. I would like to do something here."

The older generation may not be coming in off the street, but Wiels is making an effort at outreach with mixed-media workshops hosted by Belgian artists – with the local women's association Het Huis van de Vrouw, for example. It encourages the development of artistic expression, even if they don't like what's on show at Wiels. "I had never painted or used a camera before," says Anissa Zioziou, who participated last year. "It brought me out of myself."

Building on P.A.R.T.S.

Wiels may be the most visible cultural presence on Van Volxemlaan, but it wasn't the first to arrive. Set away from the road at number 164 is the home of dance ensemble Rosas and the P.A.R.T.S. dance school. The school was established in 1995 by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, arguably Belgium's best-known contemporary choreographer. It almost immediately acquired a world-wide reputation as a centre for innovation, with intensive training and advanced techniques. Last month it received the first-ever Silver Lion award for dance at the Venice Biennale.

Peter Savel is one of 24 dancers who graduated from the four-year programme this year and is currently touring Europe with his graduate show *I Have to Get Ready*. Savel came from Slovakia and moved onto the avenue having lived elsewhere in Vorst for his first two years. He now lives across the road from the school. "It's as close as it gets. I love it," he laughs. "It's a calm neighbourhood, and I like that. The school is very demanding, and I like the practicality of not having to travel to it. It really saves so much energy. I take my coffee with me and cross the street in the mornings."

Evenings on the avenue are quiet, and Savel often ends up hanging out with other dancers at his place when there isn't an opening night party at Wiels to go to. "The couple of bars in the area are nice but feel very local, with regulars – older

men – watching football. We always find ourselves saying how it would be really lovely to have a bar here where we'd feel good to go and hang out every evening."

I had that same feeling when I went to meet the Zone Inconnue crew, four DJs who broadcast every Wednesday night from Radio Vibration at The Brass cultural centre at number 364. After the show, there was nowhere for us to go but to stand out on the street and talk. The Brass is the newest creative edition to the avenue, next door to Wiels in what used to be another derelict brewery building.

DJs Initial, Mik, Aphone and Toad Shindy have been broadcasting an eclectic mix of drum 'n' bass, dubstep and break-beat together here since last autumn. "Our music is considered alternative to commercial R&B and electronic music," says Shindy. "No one else at Radio Vibration is playing it, and you don't hear it much on commercial radio."

The opportunity to broadcast has drawn them from other parts of the city, overcoming the perception that this was an unwelcoming area. "The neighbourhood had a dodgy reputation, but it is far better now," explains Mik. "Wiels quickly became famous and is attracting culture around it."

"It's a positive step to grow culture," says Aphone. "You can feel the respect in this street. People in the street here, especially Moroccan and Turkish guys, know what's happening and want to talk about the radio show with us."

It has provided the crew with an important new audience. "We love having people discover the music we love," says Initial. "That's why we do it." ♦



Van Volxemlaan is full of lovely, old beech trees

© Dieter Telemans



on the cover

This view from the back of Wiels, shot by Brussels-based photographer Dieter Telemans, could be one of the art centre's avant-garde installations, but in fact it grew organically. Or almost. A construction project started here, was shut down because of water infiltration, and now the left-behind materials are becoming part of the natural landscape

FLANDERS TODAY

JULY 14, 2010

© Bart Grietens



Peter Savel came from Slovakia to study dance at P.A.R.T.S. Now he's travelling the world in a tour of the school's graduation pieces



The view from the top floor of Wiels



"It's a positive step to grow culture": they guys of Radio Vibrations

© Dieter Telemans

Meet the neighbours

No. 264 a converted shoe factory, now mixed residential and business. **Coast**: graphic design and brand development for clients, including Fortis, Cerruti 1881 and the Flemish theatre, KVS. **Tentwelve**: web designers for Wiels, Bozar, Belgacom and Cinematek

Baneton-Garrino: architects/ design prize winners for transforming a Molenbeek sugar factory into 34 social housing apartments

No. 388 Indigo Studios: events hall with cutting-edge sound and lighting systems that hosts concerts, album releases, exhibitions and showcases new bands

No. 164 a protected Purple Beech tree

No. 45 around the corner on Wielemans Ceuppenslaan is **Villa Eugenie**: events company that has masterminded catwalk shows for the likes of Chanel, Hermes and Sonia Rykiel



© Dieter Telemans

Summer on Volxemlaan

My Dirty Little Heaven, an installation by New York-based artist Wangechi Mutu. Born in Kenya, her work explores black female identity, Western consumer culture and post-colonial history. She has transformed the first floor of Wiels into a sort of shanty town, both protective and alien. Mutu is Deutsche Bank's first-ever Artist of the Year. On at Wiels until 12 September.

Also at Wiels until 15 August is the multi-media group show *Rehabilitation*, in which young artists respond to the phenomenon of renovation and transformation in a space that is now an arts centre but was built with a very different purpose.

→ www.wiels.org

On at P.A.R.T.S./Rosas on 30 July is the popular Summer Studios, a showcase of work by dancers who've been given studio space in the building for the month of July. You get to see the fruits of their labour, while Rosas uses the opportunity to point out the lack of practice space in Brussels.

→ www.rosas.be

Summer of science

There's no need to fly your kids to a faraway land to discover exotic creatures and cultures

TANIA RABESANDRATANA

A long with sunshine, down time and the sound of ice cream vans, come along – very long – days. Two months of mostly free time for children means two months of potential boredom. If development psychologists agree that “unstructured time” can be a salutary and creative respite for children, parents are often at a loss for ideas of activities that kids enjoy and that don't involve any kind of screen.

Jim Taylor, a psychology professor at the University of San Francisco, asserts in his *Psychology Today* blog that doing nothing is not an option. “I believe that kids should be forced to do something.” He also insists that summer is a great time to bond with your children. This also happens to be the International Year of Biodiversity, so here are some ideas for both indoor and outdoor family fun close to home, with a little diversity in mind. ♦

Technopolis

This colourful science centre in Mechelen offers more than 280 interactive exhibits that help kids (and adults) grasp the scientific concepts behind everyday objects and phenomena. The interactive activities are grouped around seven themes, such as Air/Wind, Space Travel and Waterside. The newest exhibits allow children to fly a solar-powered plane and to collect, sort, shred and process waste.

If you visit on a dry day, Technopolis also promises a “scien-terrific” outdoor experience in the Science Garden, with exhibits with names like pump flute, bascule bridge and kaleidoscope. The whole exhibition is available in Dutch, English and French, and the restaurant's name is Gigabyte.

→ www.technopolis.be



Kids learn hands-on basics behind everyday science at Technopolis



Discover Brussels surprisingly abundant plant and animal life on a city safari

Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences

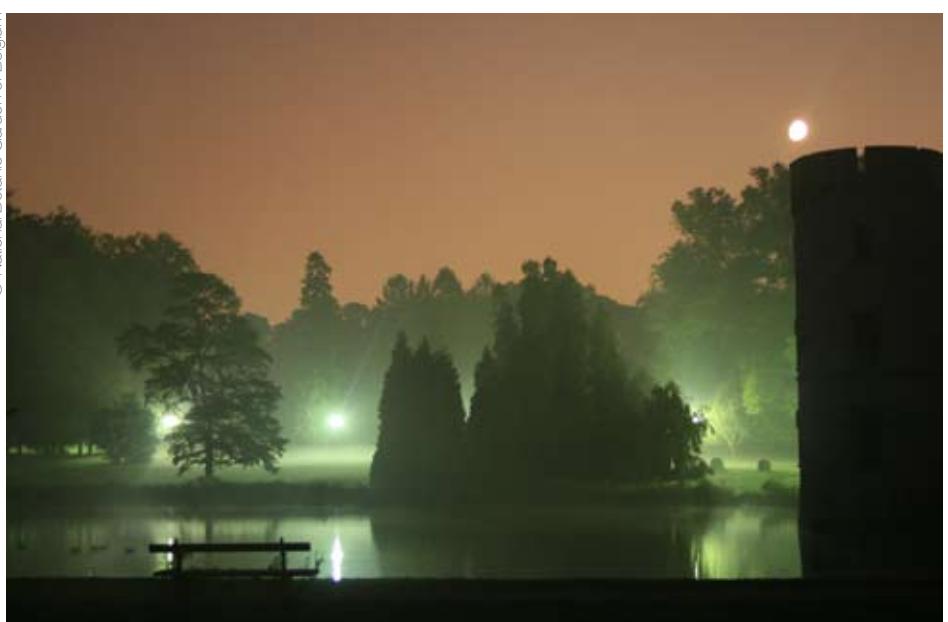
Back in the mighty metropolis, there is still plenty of life brimming on the asphalt. The Natural Sciences Institute in Brussels celebrates the International Year of Biodiversity with a city-wide safari for budding explorers. Register on the website, print the map and questionnaire, grab your camera, and off you go!

There are 50 stop-off points spread across Brussels and riddles to solve at each point that help you uncover an overlooked wealth of plant and animal life in the city. You can take it earnestly and aim for one of the prizes (including a romantic botanic weekend in Paris) or opt for a more leisurely pace, just for the pleasure of the game. The contest closes on 31 August, and website and game documents are available in Dutch, French and English.

The institute's museum, meanwhile, hosts the exhibition *Whales and Dolphins* this summer, in addition to its permanent displays. The Paleo-LAB (near the dinosaur gallery) invites accompanied children over five to a 45-minute palaeontologist role play using drawings, maps, puzzles and audiovisuals, but also a good old shovel and brush, to study real fossils. Advance booking is necessary, and, upon request, PaleoLAB animators can run the session in English.

→ www.biogeosafari.be

© National Botanic Garden of Belgium



There's only one night of the year when the National Botanic Garden is open after dark

National Botanic Garden of Belgium

Located in Meise, just three kilometres north of the Atomium, the garden offers 92 hectares of greenery (that's the equivalent of about 120 football fields), Belgium's largest greenhouse and a collection of rare plants – including tropical species and remarkable collections of African plants. The garden hosts a range of special activities during the summer.

Are you called Victor, Victoire or Victoria? If so, you're lucky to bear the same name as the giant waterlily species *Victoria amazonica*. You'll be rewarded with a free admission ticket any day in July and August. Every summer Sunday and public holiday, a horse-drawn carriage awaits all visitors for a hop-on, hop-off tour that will take them from the main entrance to the plant palace, through the glasshouse and the orangery and back again, at no extra charge. Departures are scheduled every hour from 13.00 to 17.00.

Until 24 October, the garden presents an exhibition of wildlife photography, displayed in large trunks filled with inspiring pictures of plants and animals by award-winning Flemish photographer and globe-trotter Tom Linster. On 26 and 28 August, you can not only meet the artist but get to know him very well during a day-long photography workshop at the garden. It offers the chance to explore the beauties of the garden as well as the capabilities of your camera beyond the automatic settings. The workshop (€99) also includes a year-long membership to the garden and refreshments. Dutch speakers and English speakers are equally welcome.

At the very end of the summer season, on 30 September, the garden organises an unforgettable night evening from 17.00 to 22.00. Discover the magic of the garden after dark, culminating in a visit to the candlelit greenhouses.

→ www.br.fgov.be

Royal Museum for Central Africa

The enormous Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren makes for one of Belgium's most rewarding day trips, with its magnificent park, elegant building, outdoor elephant sculptures and special exhibitions. This year, the museum celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Congo's independence with several temporary exhibitions. Congo River is particularly suited for family visits – younger visitors can get hold of a roadmap to discover the secrets of the river and can follow the riverbed with interactive activities, a labyrinth, storytelling, drawings and a giant board game.

The museum organises a range of summer activities, including workshops of African music that teenagers will love and Feel Africa! workshops for visually impaired visitors. Children will also enjoy special audioguides that make animals and masks talk throughout the exhibition rooms. Kids between seven and 12 can even hold their birthday parties at the museum – the party pack includes a workshop of African percussions for the group.

→ <http://kids.africamuseum.be>

Planetarium

Near the Atomium, the Planetarium offers a moment of contemplative grace and cosmic beauty. This summer, the Planetarium launches a new 30-minute show called *At the Edge of the Universe*, every Wednesday at 15.00 in English. The show shares some of the revelations of cutting-edge space telescopes that explore the depths of the cosmos and study the birth of stars and planets, as well as the origins of the universe. During the school holidays, the Planetarium also offers a selection of shows throughout the week in French, Dutch and German.

→ www.planetarium.be

Women speak up

Study spotlights needs of Belgium's female entrepreneurs

SABINE CLAPPERT

What do Belgium's female entrepreneurs want? It may not be the question famously posed by Sigmund Freud, but it was the question that the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men recently sought to answer.

The institute commissioned JUMP, an organisation that assists women to develop their professional careers, to survey 45,000 professionally active women across Belgium. The survey results highlight some interesting discrepancies and trends that stand in stark contrast with many deeply rooted perceptions of what it means to be an entrepreneur in Belgium. It may come as a surprise to many entrepreneurs, but Belgium is listed among the top-scoring European countries when it comes to entrepreneurship and the ease of doing business. But the lack of female entrepreneurs speaks of a different reality: a mere 2.91% of Belgian women have started their own business, while 7.91% of women in surrounding countries have done so. And, while almost half of all independent salespersons (merchants) in Belgium are women, only one in three entrepreneurs is a woman.

Women and men also start business with vastly different priorities. For

men, growth remains a key business objective, while women see their dominant needs as professional independence, personal fulfilment and work flexibility.

The genders also differ significantly in the industries in which they choose to start a business. Women start businesses mainly in the professional- or personal-services sectors, while more lucrative sectors such as technology and industrial production remain significantly lacking in female entrepreneurs. Women also frequently invest less capital in their businesses compared to men and tend to underfund their ventures.

The difficulty many women experience in starting and growing a successful business may be found at the outset of the venture. Some 73% of female entrepreneurs received no formal guidance or support when starting up their business. Additionally, most female entrepreneurs rely primarily on their personality, education and professional network to help them get their business off the ground.

"The study shows that there is a clear need for support for female entrepreneurs," says Isabella Lenarduzzi of JUMP. "They often feel isolated in their professional ambitions. We need to consider a



© shutterstock

Juggling work and family is a problem for many female entrepreneurs

life-cycle of support systems and tools that guide women through the various stages of starting, running and growing their own businesses." The study highlights a worrying perception amongst female entrepreneurs which may help account for their meagre numbers: almost half (44%) of all enterprising women with young children think that starting an own business is not socially accepted. The study also highlights the fact that these often highly educated women (70% of female entrepreneurs in Wallonia and 54% of those in Flanders hold university degrees) either don't have children (73% in Wallonia and 61% in Flanders) or wait to start their businesses until their children have left home.

Ask female entrepreneurs which measures they would like to see implemented and the answer is clear: those that allow them to keep a healthy balance between

their professional ambitions and private lives. The most acute need is to receive the same maternity leave benefits as those enjoyed by employees. Flexible childcare and support by other entrepreneurs (so-called "flying entrepreneurs") in case of illness are high among their most pressing needs. They also want more visibility via a network of female "ambassadors", a web portal and large-scale events.

"Female entrepreneurs are very energetic individuals who are passionate and committed to their businesses. Often however, they lack the guidance and support that one needs to grow a business successfully. It is now our job as a society to provide them with the tools to help them make their business ventures successful in the long run," concludes Lenarduzzi. ♦

TV tops workplace chat chart

Employees spend an hour a day chatting to colleagues about subjects unrelated to work, according to a survey by the British recruitment agency HireScores.com. On average, chatting takes up 67 minutes a day, with 8% of respondents estimating their own average at three hours. The main subjects of conversation are:

- 1. Television – 52%
- 2. Weekend plans – 49%
- 3. Food – 46%
- 4. Sport – 43%
- 5. The previous evening – 41%
- 6. Colleagues – 37%
- 7. Friends – 35%
- 8. Love life – 34%
- 9. Music – 31%
- 10. Holidays – 29%

One in four said the subject depends on who is in the vicinity. Eight out of ten said they would never chat about non work-related matters if the boss were around. ♦



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Café protests in Ghent and Knokke

Owners of cafes and restaurants in the centre of Ghent are to hold a protest action during the Gentse Feesten, which begin on 17 July, against a decision by the city council to double the tax they pay on their terraces. The measure only applies to premises which normally have no terrace, or which have extended their terrace for the event. "We want to put pressure on the city council to consult the sector the next time the question of higher taxes comes up," said Patrick De Bouw, local representative of Ho.Re.Ca Vlaanderen, the industry organisation. "Normally we have good relations with the city, but our members were massively against this decision in a time of general difficulties. A spokesman for the city said the last tax increase dates back to 2003, and called the latest measure "very reasonable".

- Meanwhile in Knokke, a dispute between local café owners and operators who rent out beach

chairs went against the industry when a court in Bruges refused to issue an injunction against the beach-chair businesses selling drinks. Up and down the coast, the increasing tendency for beach operators to sell drinks to customers has run up against protest from the catering industry, which considers it an attack on their businesses. Cafes and restaurants, the industry points out, are required to adhere to health and hygiene regulations which do not apply to the beach operators, who also don't have the overheads of premises, staff and other costs. In particular, the industry and the city's planning inspectors object to the beach operators installing wooden decks to act as beach terraces in competition with the permanent cafes on the seafront. The Bruges court refused to suspend their operations with an injunction, but the main case still has to be resolved at a full hearing some time later. ♦

SMEs suffer less absenteeism

People who work for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are absent through illness less often than other employees, according to a survey of 533 companies carried out by Unizo, the representative organisation for the self-employed. The average number of sick days per employee per year in business is 12, but almost two-thirds of SMEs say their own experience is less. Only 33% think a prevention policy pays dividends; of those who do, actions such as medical examinations, attention to the ergonomics of furniture and equipment, training and the encouragement of exercise during working hours are cited. As a result of these measures, 58% saw fewer lost working days, and 30% saw increased productivity.

When absenteeism does occur, 22% take on temporary staff, and only 7% recruit new staff. By far the majority, 72.8%, ensure the work of the missing employee is shared out among colleagues. In about half of all cases, the employer himself takes up the slack. Only 31% of employers make use of the government's medical check-up service which determines if an employee really is sick. Most cited the cost – €60 for a single consultation – as the main disincentive. Small business people, apparently, are a robust lot: more than 80% were not sick even for one working day in the last year. Of those who were, 72% carried on working regardless. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banking • ING

ING Bank is to replace Citibank as the sponsor of the Royal Belgian Football Union and of the Red Devils, the national football team. The contract with ING, which also sponsors the Dutch national side, will run for four years. ING also supports the joint bid by Belgium and the Netherlands to host the 2018 World Cup.

Energy • Enfinity

West Flanders green energy producer Enfinity is to develop a 40 megawatt (mW) solar farm in Thailand, with construction to begin next year. Thailand's government intends to have 20% of its energy produced from renewable resources by 2020, said Martin Parodi, head of Asia-Pacific for Enfinity.

Energy • Limburg Wind

More than 1,000 people have bought over 16,000 shares worth €2 million in the Limburg Wind cooperative since it was launched in mid-June. The province intends to use the windmill park to become CO2 neutral by 2020. Shares cost €125 and bring a maximum dividend of 6%.

Entertainment • Fitraco

Antwerp-based Fitraco, which specialises in theme parks, has been ordered by the Malaysian government to sell back its giant ferris wheel, the Eye on Malaysia in Melaka, at the government's price or be forced to dismantle the attraction. The government is offering €1.7 million, claiming the wheel has become dilapidated since it was installed in 2007, first in Kuala Lumpur, before being relocated.

Food • Lotus Bakeries

Lembeke-based Lotus Bakeries will open its first coffee shop in the trendy Pier 39 area in San Francisco. Lotus, which makes speculoos, waffles and cakes, recently handed out a free biscuit to every visitor to the Belgian pavilion at the World Expo in Shanghai. The Biscoff coffee shop will try to sell the biscuit-and-coffee concept to the US market. It is a partnership with the Simmons Family Waterfront Hospitality restaurant chain.

Media • Woestijnvis

Independent TV production house Woestijnvis will not have its exclusive contract renewed when it runs out in May next year, the Flemish public broadcaster VRT said. The current contract pays Woestijnvis extra on condition it does not work for other broadcasters.

Travel • Brussels Airlines

Brussels Airlines last week added four new destinations in western Africa: Accra in Ghana, Lomé in Togo, Cotonou in Benin and Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. The number of flights to Abidjan, in addition, will be increased from four a week to six.

Death in Venice (of the North)



Rodenbach's description of Bruges in *Bruges-la-Morte* is not exactly tourist office material: "In Bruges, a miracle of the climate has produced some mysterious chemistry of the atmosphere, an interpenetration which neutralises too-bright colours, reduces them to a uniform tone of reverie, to an amalgam of greyish drowsiness."

In 1892, one Belgian writer painted a very different portrait of Bruges than the popular notions of today

IAN MUNDELL

As you push your way through the crowds of tourists in Bruges, particularly on these long summer days, it's strange to think that the city was once synonymous with gloom and death.

But at the end of the 19th century, that was how the city was seen by many of Europe's artists, thanks to the Belgian writer Georges Rodenbach. On the anniversary of his birth this week, join us on a journey back to the *fin de siècle* Capital of Melancholy.

The irony of Rodenbach's story is that he spent very little time in Bruges, visiting only occasionally to see his father's family. The city was economically moribund in the middle of the 19th century and no place for people hoping to get on in the world.

Rodenbach was born in Tournai on 16 July, 1855 but raised in Ghent, where his father was inspector of weights and measures. He went to school in Ghent, going on to study law at the city's university. It was here that he began to write, with an extended visit to Paris in 1878-79 giving him a taste for the literary high life and material for his first journalistic pieces.

Back in Ghent, Rodenbach's legal career progressed, but, in parallel, he published poetry and contributed to newspapers and journals. He moved to Brussels in 1883, still combining the two occupations but increasingly favouring literature. By this time he had become a significant figure in the revival of Belgian literature alongside other 19th-century authors who wrote in French, such as Maurice Maeterlinck and Emile Verhaeren.

But the temptations of Paris were strong, and in 1888 Rodenbach moved definitively to the French capital, with the aim of devoting himself completely to writing. He was remarkably successful, becoming one of the first Belgian writers to establish himself in Parisian literary society. He was seen in all the right places and was associated with figures such as Stéphane Mallarmé, Alphonse Daudet and Edmond de Goncourt.

"He wasn't seen as a French writer, but almost a French writer," explains Christian Berg, emeritus professor of literature at the University of Antwerp. "He had a slight accent; he had a physiognomy that suggested he came from the north. He was well turned-out, always very well-dressed. He was a bit of a dandy."



Georges Rodenbach's tomb in the Père Lachaise in Paris never ceases to frighten tourists at the famous cemetery. Rodenbach bursts from his grave, holding a rose

It was in Paris that Bruges became a focus in his writing, representing melancholia and nostalgia for a long-gone Flanders. This is strongest in the short novel *Bruges-la-Morte*, a title with multiple meanings once you know the story.

It concerns Hugues Viane, a widower in his 40s who moves to Bruges after the death of his young wife. Living a solitary existence, with just a devout old Flemish housekeeper for company, he dwells on portraits and photographs of his wife and mementoes, such as a long braid of her yellow hair that he keeps in a glass case. Long walks in the sombre city accord perfectly with his mood of introspection. Bruges is both a dead city and the personification of Hugues' dead wife. Never named, she is always referred to as La Morte, the dead woman.

One day Hugues sees a woman in the street who is the double of his dead wife. He pursues her and discovers that she is Jane Scott, a dancer at the opera house. In the months that follow, she becomes his mistress, but his ulterior motive of shaping this show-girl into the ideal woman he has lost are frustrated. Finally, Hugues kills Jane, strangling her with his dead wife's hair.

Serialised in *Le Figaro* in 1892, then published as a book with suitably gloomy photographs of the city, *Bruges-la-Morte* was a huge success with readers in France and French-speaking Belgium. "It's not really a novel, nor is it a fantastic tale; it's a sort of long prose-poem," says Berg. "It is also one of the first novels where photographs were inserted in the text, not so much illustrating it as extending it. In that sense, it has a certain modernity."

Rodenbach continued to develop this theme for the rest of his short career, dying in 1898, aged only 44. "In a way, he specialised in this subject: the dead city, nostalgia, the lost world of childhood and so on," Berg explains. "So it's a rather obsessive world view."

The exception is his final novel, *Le Carillonneur*, which focuses on the campaign of architect Joris Borluut to preserve Bruges as an ancient city of art rather than see it modernised. This plot touches on a project that was eventually carried through at the turn of the last century, re-opening Bruges' links to the sea and restoring it as a commercial port through Zeebrugge.

Unlike *Bruges-la-Morte*, which is highly poetical and a landmark in symbolist literature, *Le Carillonneur* has a more realist approach to the city and its people, although the same romantic air of faded glory lingers in its descriptive passages.

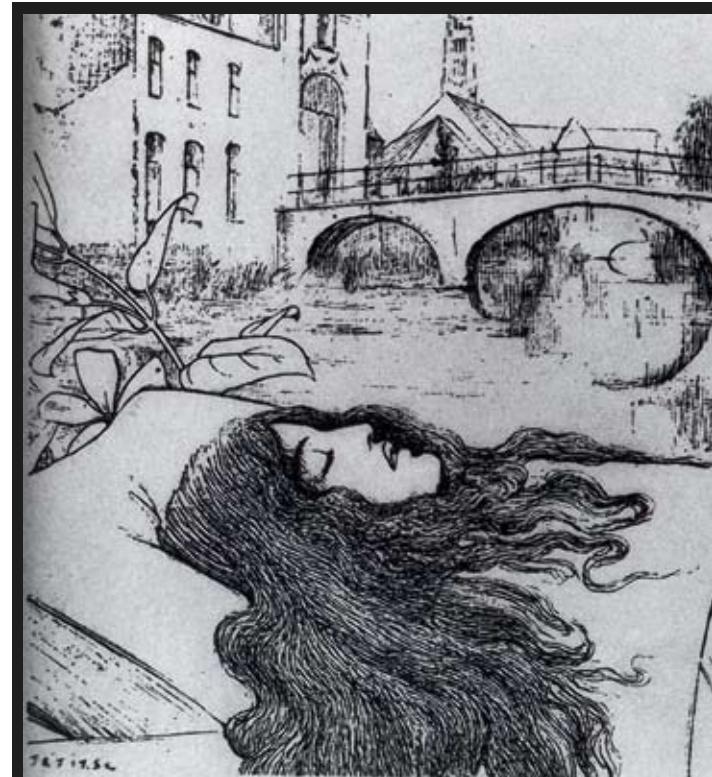
This final novel also reflects Rodenbach's position regarding Flanders and says a lot about his place in Belgian literature. "It wasn't about fighting for the Flemish cause," Berg says. "It was about fighting for Flanders as a region with a significant historical and cultural past – but preferably speaking French."

These were ideas that Rodenbach shared with Maeterlinck and Verhaeren and which naturally separated him from writers working in Dutch, such as his cousin Albrecht Rodenbach. Unlike Maeterlinck and Verhaeren, however, it is unlikely that Rodenbach spoke Dutch at all, although the characters in *Le Carillonneur* are passionate advocates of its use and can



Georges Rodenbach, lawyer, poet, author and melancholist

© Doc Archives & Museum of Literature, fonds G Rodenbach



Belgian symbolist Fernand Khnopff drew the frontispiece for the original edition of *Bruges-la-Morte*



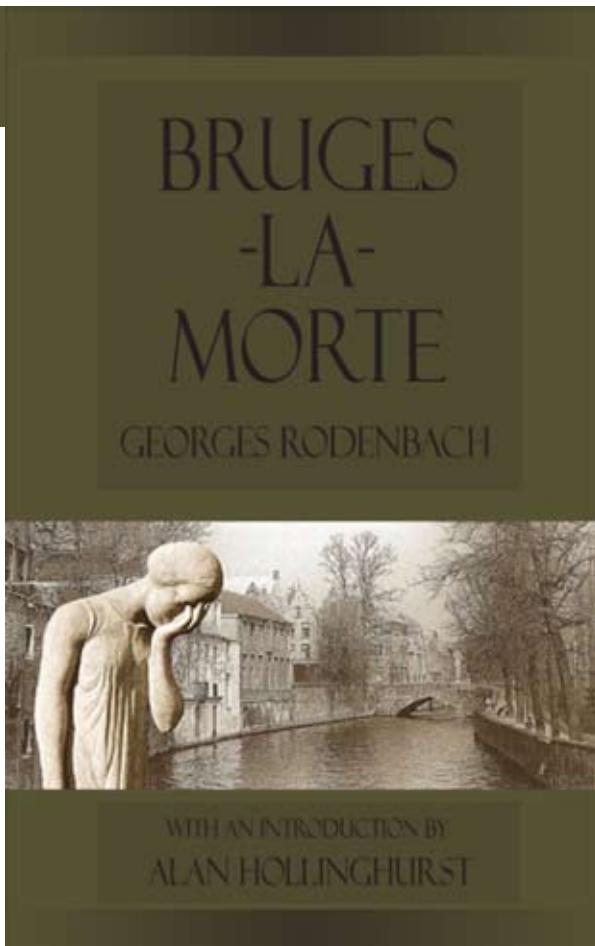
Rodenbach in English

English translations of Georges Rodenbach's main works are available from Dedalus European Classics. *Bruges-la-Morte* is paired with the earlier essay *The Death Throes of Towns* and has an introduction by Alan Hollinghurst and new photographs showing that Rodenbach's Bruges still exists. *Le Carillonneur* is published as *The Bells of Bruges*.

Bruges-la-Morte: an excerpt

In the muted atmosphere of the waterways and the deserted streets, Hugues was less sensitive to the sufferings of his heart, his thoughts of his dead wife were less painful. He had seen her, heard her again more clearly, finding the face of his departed Ophelia as he followed the canals, hearing her voice in the thin, distant song of the bells.

In this way the town, once beautiful and beloved too, embodied the loss he felt. Bruges was his dead wife. And his dead wife was Bruges. The two were united in a like destiny. It was Bruges-la-Morte, the dead town entombed in its stone quais, with the arteries of its canals cold once the great pulse of the sea had ceased beating in them.



The legacy of Bruges-la-Morte

From Henry Miller to Alfred Hitchcock, this little Belgian book has left its mark

The literary heritage of *Bruges-la-Morte* is considerable, although it has to be placed in context. Berg traces Rodenbach's inspiration back to poems about the city written in English by William Wordsworth, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and in French by Charles Baudelaire. Belgian writers such as Camille Lemonnier and Marcel Wyseur picked up Rodenbach's themes, as did Michel de Ghelderode and Marguerite Yourcenar later on. Further afield, Rodenbach's influence can be seen in the work of Thomas Mann and Yukio Mishima. In English, Henry Miller is one of Berg's favourite carriers of the flame, thanks to the little-known essay *Impressions of Bruges* (1953). "It's one of

the most beautiful texts on Bruges that I've ever read," he says. Alan Hollinghurst's *The Folding Star* (1994) continues the tradition. "It's a novel entirely focused on Bruges, on Khnopff, on Rodenbach, on the woman lost and rediscovered. It shows that these themes are still current." *Bruges-la-Morte* continues to be published and translated on its own merits, but also because of its adaptation in other arts. The most important of these is the 1920 opera *Die tote Stadt* by the German composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold, which is performed frequently around the world. In the cinema, both the opera and the book have been adapted for the big screen, with Roland Verhavert's 1981 film *Brugge, die stille* a notable Flemish retelling of

the story. Verhavert described the film as an opera without songs, using the lush music of Claude Debussy throughout, a composer closely associated with French symbolism. However, the strangest film connection is Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), which shares with *Bruges-la Morte* the theme of a man trying to remake one woman in the image of another. The link is likely to be an indirect one, via the French novel *D'Entre les morts* by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac, which provided Hitchcock with the story. But it is still fascinating to see how far the ripples from this slight Belgian novel have spread.

CULTURE NEWS

The Flemish government has awarded an annual subsidy of €205,000 to the digital image bank Lukas - *Art in Flanders*, which gathers images of artworks held in various collections. The website was set up in 2006 and provides high-quality images as well as information on the works. The subsidy will run until 2013, when it may be renewed.

→ www.lukasweb.be

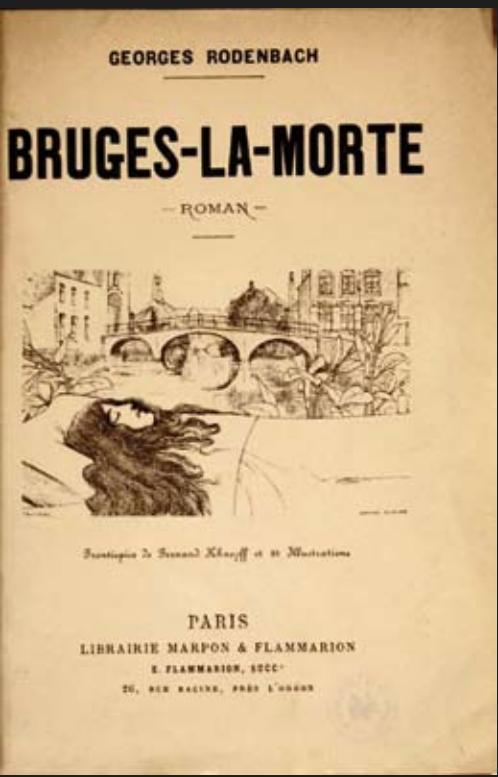
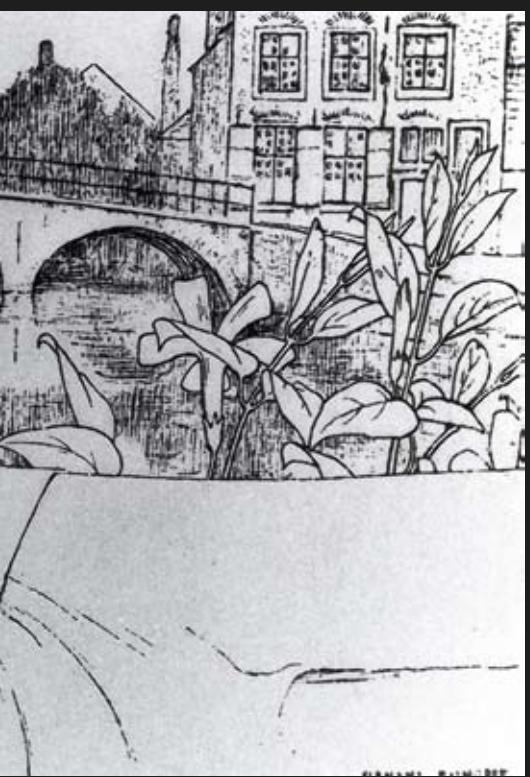
The Contius Foundation has been granted planning permission to install an *organ in the Sint-Michielskerk* in Leuven, seven years after the project was first announced. The organ will be constructed according to the principles of Christoph Contius (1676-1722), the preferred organ-builder of JS Bach. The foundation raised the funds for its original project – to install the organ in the Sint-Pieterskerk – but came up against numerous administrative obstacles. In the end, they were able to place the organ – with 3,000 pipes weighing a total of 16 tonnes – in another church in the city.

Michel Morvan, drummer with the folk-roots band Urban Trad, was last week found dead in his Brussels apartment. Urban Trad came in second in the 2003 Eurovision Song Contest, with the first song in the contest's history sung in an invented language. Morvan, 45, died of a heart attack, the band's manager said, after suffering heart problems for more than a year. He was also active in jazz trio Mirages and fusion project O.O.P.S.

Concert promoter **Live Entertainment** has obtained an extension of the legal agreement that allows it to carry on operating, after parent company The Entertainment Group went broke. Live Entertainment is responsible for next month's Markrock in Leuven, as well as the TV show *Vlaanderen Muziekland*. The company was faced with unexpected debts when the Dutch parent, run by singing star Marco Borsato, went bankrupt last year.

The **Antwerp Fine Arts Museum** has launched a new website featuring a 3D tour of the Rubens Hall, a catalogue of over 4,500 artworks and an events calendar, just before the institution closes for renovation. The virtual tour of the Rubens Hall requires downloading a software package for viewing online and is also available in an application for iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch.

→ www.kmska.be



Yes, it's the same Rodenbach

The well-known Rodenbach beer, now produced by Palm Breweries, was first brewed in Bruges in 1821 by four Rodenbach brothers, one of whom was the grandfather of Georges Rodenbach.

© studio Alice Piemme/AVL

Deconstructing colonial Africa

GEO-Graphics rips up Africa's borders and mixes the old with the new

EMMA PORTIER DAVIS

What do you get if you tear up all the colonial maps of Africa and redraw the continent's borders on the basis of its geographic zones? This is exactly what curators set out to do in Bozar's *GEO-Graphics* exhibition.

Dividing Africa into six regions – Maghreb, Savannah, Sahel, Forest, Mountain and Desert – this show, the cornerstone of the Visionary Africa festival, celebrates the art of the 17 African countries that won their independence from colonialism in 1960.

"This was an ideological statement, a way of saying we didn't want to take into account the colonial borders of the past," says Anne-Marie Boutiaux, one of the curators of the exhibition and head of ethnographic art at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren.

Just as important was the team's decision to include artefacts dating back to the 16th century and contemporary art, from remarkable photos to audio-visual pieces from all 17 nations, and to give them a modern, naturally lit setting.

Mixing it up

A huge glass showcase dominates the entry to the exhibition, containing a series of tribal African statues. This is the Sahel region ("the shore"), which lies between the Saharan desert and the humid south, stretching from the Red Sea to the Atlantic.

Nicola Setari, director of Bozar's Visionary Africa programme of events to mark the independence, beckons me over to a bench against the side wall, instructing me to take in the whole scene and not just the individual pieces. Peeking through the glass, I see a mural of photos of capitals from the Sahel region, taken by this expo's artistic director David Adjaye. In fact, his photo essays of the continent's 53 capitals were an inspiration for *GEO-Graphics*.

"Looking at these objects with the background of the city scenes brings them alive. Seeing them in this way allows us to re-contextualise them," says Setari, emphasising that the exhibition was designed to "short-circuit" the view that African art was all about tribal relics.

Throughout the exhibition, there is this mixture of the old and the new, with contemporary art coming from eight regional art centres, which have contributed mini-expos within the expo as a way of representing their cities.

Particularly striking are photographs of the Niger Delta by George Osodi. There's a silhouette of a cyclist laden with firewood against the backdrop of a gas flare (a method used by oil majors to purify their black gold) and a masked Delta rebel, laden with ammunition.

Provocative bank notes, depicting a single African currency unit hang from the wall, adorned with the continent's heroes such as Nelson Mandela. "Some say real independence will only come to Africa when it has its own currency," explains Setari.



© Cape Town - Essop Brothers

Somewhere between the old and the new are a series of Senegalese glass paintings, particular to the region and depicting local legends – not really contemporary, notes Setari, "because of its link to cultural history".

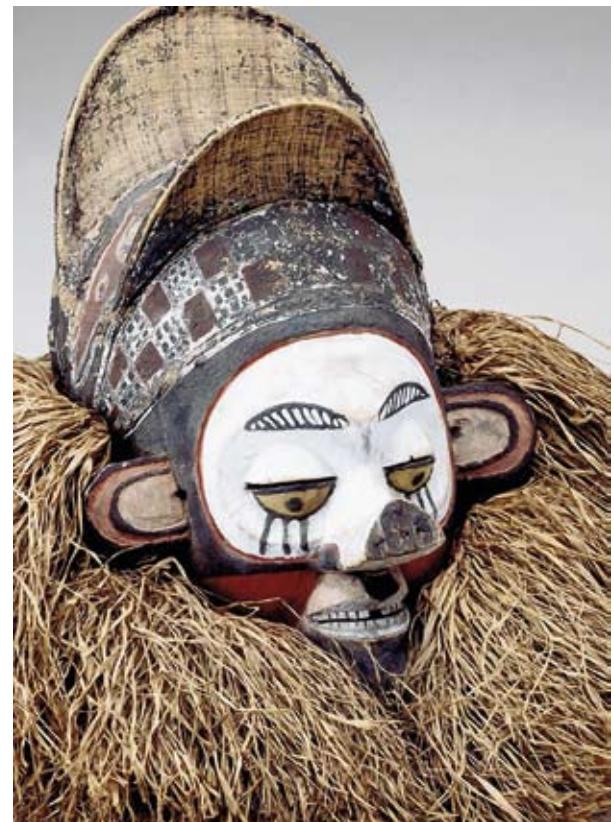
Definitely off the beaten track is the slide show of restored artefacts. This is not one for kids (they are not allowed) nor the faint-hearted, as, amid mended pots and bowls, gruesome slides of mutilated and reconstructed faces of First World War soldiers flash up.

"The purpose of the comparison is to show how the techniques of plastic surgeons and the techniques of restoration follow certain schemes," explains Setari. We agreed it was a wonder how these men could have survived such horrific injuries.

Political messages abound. Among contemporary art from Abidjan is a boat filled with heads. On the surface, it's about the lost lives of refugees who try to navigate the Mediterranean – though it could also represent the journey of souls in the after-world.

The exhibition's deconstruction of the colonial borders and the coalition of old and new is to show, says Boutiaux, "the huge wealth of African creativity. You can see that art there is not dead." ♦

► www.bozar.be



© Mask Yaka, Congo, collection MRAC Tervuren; photo Huysmans-Vuyts

Visionary Africa: different visions of a continent



Aside from *GEO-Graphics*, Bozar is running several exhibitions, performances and concerts as part of the festival Visionary Africa.

There are two photo exhibitions well worth a visit. *Pôze III / Africa Town* is a compilation of work by amateurs and professionals of how they see Africa in Brussels. My favourite piece is of two suited black men eating cornets of fries in Troonplein next to the statue of Congo coloniser King Leopold II.

A Useful Dream, meanwhile, presents African photography through the last five decades, from shots of 1960s chicks with bouffant hair to modern-day drag queens. In one, a nude woman strides proudly down the street while a shopkeeper gawps from his window.

The 2007 pictures from Myriam Abdelaziz of war-wounded Africans are nothing short of disturbing. One subject, a young man without legs, is quoted: "I have nothing to say; I have too much pain, and there would be too much to say anyway."

In concerts, look out for Angélique Kidjo, a Grammy award-winning superstar from Benin, who performed at the World Cup opening concert in South Africa, and Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour (pictured), who has just launched his new album *Dakar-Kingston*.

The Visionary Africa programme runs until 25 September, when there will be a panel discussion and a concert with Dakar-born Didier Awadi, West Africa's pioneering king of hip hop.

Sizing up the Scheldt

The Old Scheldt River and its Castle Marnix have inspired poetry and halted invading Normans

TEXT AND PHOTOS MELISSA MAKI

Turn-of-the-century poet Emile Verhaeren grew up along the banks of the Scheldt River. This unique and picturesque landscape, with its ever-flowing water, figured prominently in much of his work. For the fourth edition in our series on castle recreation, we take you to Antwerp province for a trek that features both the old and new courses of this historic waterway and a feudal castle. The Castle Marnix de Saint-Aldegonde dates all the way back to the ninth century. This striking, fortified castle was first built on the banks of the Old Scheldt River and served as considerable protection against invading Normans. But the stronghold was lost when the river switched its course in the 13th century.

Since 1789, the castle has been in the possession of the descendants of Philip of Marnix, lord of Saint-Aldegonde. Philip was a writer and politician. He served as secretary to Prince William of Orange, was mayor of Antwerp and is often credited as author of the Dutch national anthem. The castle has an exhibition dedicated to this fascinating man's history.

Oude Schelde

The Scheldeland knooppuntennetwerk (junction network) makes it incredibly easy to navigate walks in the region. Like the many bike networks around Flanders, you can simply write down the numbers of the various junctions and let these guide you on your route. The already-planned *Oude Schelbewandeling* (Old Scheldt walk) is a 10-kilometre loop that meanders along both the old and new courses of the Scheldt and takes you through some of the area's most gorgeous green spaces.

Begin your walk at Het Landhuis, an old castle in Bornem that houses tourist information for the area. The

staff are very friendly and helpful. You can buy a walking map here as well as other various guides and brochures. Head west from Het Landhuis towards junction 1 and then continue on towards 5. You'll walk first along the edge of a small lake. Tread carefully here – the grassy path is right next to the water, and I had to be cautious of crossing ducklings. On summer weekends, this is a very popular spot for anglers as well.

Past the lake, you'll find a boardwalk through a wooded area and then you arrive at junction 5. Next head towards 21. You'll walk along a red brick path that is for both walkers and cyclists. Some of the route is lined with tall deciduous trees.

On your left, you can catch glimpses of the Old Scheldt. Here along Temsesteenweg, you'll see a series of adorable summer cottages on the water.

Near junction 21, you have a nice picnic spot on your right and on your left is Het Sas (the lock) an impressive old link between the new and old courses of the Scheldt. Het Sas was originally built in 1592 under the direction of Spanish nobleman Pedro Coloma (who also owned and rebuilt the castle itself). The lock has since been renovated. The charming Restaurant Het Sas is adjacent to the lock.

This paved path also has a lot of bike traffic. It's mostly farmland – fields on our left and the new Scheldt to your right. After you pass a flock of sheep, you'll get to the café De Snek. This is junction 22. Left off the path and down the hill is junction 27. You'll turn left just before a pretty pond adorned with lily pads. Although you can cycle much of the old Scheldt, tall grass and muddy patches make this route a better walk. ♦



Junction 22 is one of the loveliest parts of the walk – a narrow green corridor with both fat-bottomed knot willows and tall, thin trees with flowing foliage. It's deliciously quiet here. The dominant soundscape is the wind whispering through the woods and the calls of birds.

As you emerge out of the thicket, you'll see a big field straight ahead. You get a dramatic view of the back of the castle across this open expanse. You've also arrived at junction 27. Keep following the path left towards junction 21. You'll pass fields, woods, residential areas and a small chapel. From junction 21, you continue back to complete the loop. With a stop for lunch and a steady pace, you've logged about 3.5 hours.

Visit the castle

The Castle Marnix de Saint-Aldegonde features engravings by Pieter Breughel the Elder as well as collections of lace, antique dolls and furniture. There is also a carriage museum on the site. Groups of 10 or more can request guided tours in English, Dutch or French. The castle is not normally open to individuals, but each Sunday from 22 August to 12 September, anyone can visit. ♦

Castle Marnix de Saint-Aldegonde

Kasteelstraat 34, Bornem

→ www.castlemarnixdesaintaldegonde.be

Getting there

It's an easy walk from the Bornem train station to the tourist information office, which is on Boomstraat 1.

→ www.toerismekleinbrabant.be



Lunch by the lock

't Sas Café is an excellent place to stop and rest your weary feet. The terrace is conveniently located next to the path, and the wide umbrellas provide ample shade. Here you can enjoy a wonderfully traditional Flemish meal like *stoverij* (beef stew), *vidée* (vol-au-vent) or *gegratineerd witloof met hesp en puree* (endive and ham a gratin, with mashed potatoes). Hint: the menu is printed on an LP jacket; pull out the record to see the house specialties (which are more reasonably priced). And since you are in Bornem, don't leave without trying the Bornem tripel, a well-balanced and thirst-quenching beer made by Brouwerij Van Steenberge.

→ www.gezelligtafelen.be



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Jovanka Steele

COURTNEY DAVIS

Jovanka Steele is an American woman with a Russian name living in Belgium. It sounds like a joke waiting to happen, which is appropriate since Steele is funny. Really funny. Her blog, which she updates sporadically, never fails to amuse, but it is her stand-up comedy on which she stakes her career.

Steele is the sole performer in this year's incredibly popular English Comedy Night at Ghent's Comedy Festival. In fact, it was English Comedy Night that drew her to Flanders in the first place, back in 2003. This year, Steele will perform her new one-woman show *Adventures in Waffleland*. As the title implies, it's all about what it's like to be an American expat living in Belgium.

She should know. Married to a Fleming and living in Ghent for four years, Steele has accumulated a wealth of topics for her show. It might seem awkward, lampooning the very people she is trying to make laugh, but "Belgians usually love my perspective!" she insists. "They love laughing at themselves - it's a sort of laughing at/with thing, really. Also, I think it can be fun for them to hear how strange

some of the stuff they do seems to a foreigner. I love their goofy little foibles, and I think they get that." Ghent's Comedy Festival, part of the larger Gentse Feesten, includes comedy for kids, an all-female line up and some big Dutch-speaking names, like Thomas Smith from the Netherlands and the Flemish comedian Bert Gabriëls. Held in a gorgeous 13th-century stone building in the middle of the city, it is a nice reprieve from the Gentse Feesten crowds. Normally, English Comedy Night consists of a handful of comedians, but organisers are confident enough in Steele to let her carry the evening this year.

Her show's title, she says, stems from her's - and most Americans' - rudimentary knowledge of Belgium: waffles and chocolate. "I still to this day have never had a proper Belgian waffle. Weird, huh? First I was always on a diet, and now I'm a vegan. But I fully intend to eat the first vegan Belgian waffle I see, if for no other reason than to have the full Belgian experience."

In addition to her cultural comparisons, she can't help but incorporate some of her personal

life, such as loving cats (she is the owner of 12). "The cats can't help but being mentioned as I spend so much time hanging out with them. Honestly, I've even started picking up some of their mannerisms; if I'm annoyed, sometimes I'll hiss, for instance. I can't believe I admitted that. Clearly, I need to get out of the house more."

Her vegan diet - no meat, fish, eggs or dairy products - is starting to creep into the act as well. "People have all sorts of strange reactions when I tell them I'm a vegan. Sometimes they just can't wrap their heads around it and say things like, 'so you still eat chicken, right?' Or sometimes they even get angry about it. One guy, upon finding out I didn't eat meat, opened his mouth to show me what he was chewing, as if that was going to lure me into ordering a hamburger. Odd, very odd. I just hissed at him." ♦

English Comedy Night

24 July, 22.00; 25 July, 20.00
Hof van Ryhove
Onderstraat 22, Ghent

→ www.comedyfestival.be

MORE COMEDY/CABARET THIS WEEK

Kommil Foo De Luxe → Capitole, Ghent →

De Vertelf (all ages) → Grensland, Watou

Sacha Guitry in La Jalouse → Karreveld Castle, Brussels



GET YOUR
TICKETS NOW!

Goldfrapp

23 November, 20.00
Ancienne Belgique
Brussels

She doesn't take to on-stage banter, but Alison Goldfrapp still gives a great show. With mythologically inspired fashion and musical styles that range from classical minimalism to dance pop to glam to electronica, it's never a dull moment. Together with Will Gregory, the other half of this dynamic duo, she'll probably share plenty from the new album *Head First*, another new direction: '80s synthpop.



→ www.abconcerts.be

Ghent

Charlatan
Vlasmarkt 6; 09.224.24.57
www.charlatan.be
JUL 15 22.00 Moiano & Friends



World & Folk

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
JUL 16 20.30 Vinylio, rebetiko (Greece)
JUL 17 20.30 Silvia Abalos & Quartetto Cantango, Argentinian tango

Café Bonnefooi
Steenstraat 8; 0487.62.22.31
www.bonnefooi.be
JUL 14 22.00 Tounga JUL 21 22.00 Tangawissi

Le Bar du Matin
Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59
http://bardumatins.blogspot.com
JUL 15 21.00 Nyali (Zambia) JUL 16 22.00 DJ Dark Matter 'instrumentalism'
JUL 20 21.00 Bal National with Les Frères Smith, ethio funk, afro beats (France) JUL 22 21.00 1060, neo-soul

Recyclart
Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recycleart.be
JUL 15 23.00 Ambrassband JUL 16 22.00 El Remolón (Arg). 23.30 Maguare (Colombia/Bel). 1.00 El G (Arg). 2.00 Fauna (Arg). 4.00 El Remolón

Viage
Anspachlaan 30; 070.44.34.43
www.viage.be
JUL 17 22.00 Cintia Rodriguez



Classical & New Music

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
JUL 20 20.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Patrick Davin: Vieuxtemps, Ravel, Sarasate (prelude to Belgium's national day July 21, in the presence of the royal family)

St Michael and St Gudula Cathedral
Sinter-Goedeleplein; 02.507.82.00
www.cathedralestmichel.be
JUL 19 20.00 Tineke Van Ingelgem, soprano; Kristaan Van Ingelgem, organ; Peeters, Litaize, J Jongen, more

Théâtre de la Vie
Dwarsstraat 45; 02.219.60.06
www.theatredelavie.be
JUL 17 20.15 Sophie Hallynck, harp; Steve Houben, saxophone; Julie Mossay, voice; Martijn Vink, cello: music from the Elizabethan Fitzwilliam Virginal Book

Ghent
St Bavo's Abbey
Gandastraat 1; 09.233.68.78
www.debjloke.be
Concerts at 15.00 (part of the Gentse Feesten):
JUL 20 Christine Busch, violin; Olivier Marron, cello: Schulhoff, Britten, Ravel, Werner Wolf Glaser
JUL 21 15.00 Kristian Bezuidenhout, piano; Esther Yoo, violin: Beethoven, Haydn, Kreisler, Bach
JUL 22 15.00 Skip Sempé, Olivier Fortin, harpsichords: Louis & François Couperin, Rameau, Scarlatti



Ghent
NTGent Schouwburg
Sint-Baafsplaat 17; 09.225.01.01
www.ntgent.be
Until JUL 25 20.30 Les Ballets C de la B and NTGent in Gardenia, directed by Alain Platel and Frank Van Laecke (in Dutch)



Antwerp
Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.muhka.be
Until AUG 22 August Orts: Correspondence, work by the four Brussels artists who make up the Auguste Orts production platform on aspects of apparatus (camera movement, editing, sound vs image) and the unstable status of language
Until SEP 19 Art Kept Me Out of Jail, performance installations by Jan Fabre

Diamond Museum
Koningin Astridplein 13-23; 03.202.48.90
www.diamantmuseum.be
Until AUG 31 HarT voor HarD, jewellery in the shape of a heart

Fashion Museum (MoMu)
Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70
www.momu.be
Until AUG 8 BLACK: Masters of Black in Fashion & Costume, historical phases

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of the colour black, its diversity in hue according to material and masterpieces by contemporary designers

Middelheim Museum
Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50
www.middelheimmuseum.be

Until SEP 19 New Monuments in the Middelheim Museum, Belgian artists focus on the future of the monument

Photo Museum (FoMu)

Until SEP 5 Filip Tas, work by the late Antwerp-based photojournalist, critic and visual arts instructor, who helped usher in a new era of media photography
Until SEP 5 American Documents, Walker Evans' 1940s Labour Anonymous series and part of Robert Frank's The Americans from the 1950s join several well-known American photographers of the 1970s, including Diane Arbus, Robert Adams, Lewish Baltz and Mitch Epstein

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
www.kmska.be
Until OCT 3 Closing Time, curated by Flemish artist Jan Vanriet, who presents his own work alongside related pieces from the museum's collection

Bruges

Hospitaalmuseum
Mariastraat 38; 050.44.87.11
www.museabrugge.be

Until NOV 7 Ivory in Bruges, rare pieces from museums, churches and monasteries

Kunstcentrum Oud St.-Jan

Mariastraat 38; 050.47.61.00
www.miro-brugge.be
Until OCT 3 Expo Miró, lithographs, ceramics and manuscripts from the surrealist painter Joan Miró

Brussels

Archief en Museum voor het Vlaams Leven te Brussel
Arduinkkaai 28; 02.209.06.01
www.amvb.be

Until AUG 31 Herinnering & Migratie: Erfgoed van nieuwe Brusselaars (Memory & Migration: The Heritage of new Brusselaars), presentation of the stories behind the arrival of 19 new immigrants to Brussels

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80
www.stripmuseum.be

Until AUG 29 Moomin: Tove Jansson's Dreamworld, work by the Finnish illustrator and author

Until JAN 30 The Studio of Franquin: Jijé, Morris and Will, rare documents and drawings show mutual influences between the four comic-strip artists who revolutionised the art form in Europe

Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 21; 02.770.53.33
www.wittockiana.org

Until SEP 11 Parti pris: the duo Léon Wuidar and La Pierre d'Alun, books and illustrated bookbindings

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be

Until SEP 26 GEO-Graphics: Mapping Historical and Contemporary Art Practice in Africa, African objects from Belgian museums come face-to-face with work of contemporary African artists (part of Visionary Africa)

Until OCT 10 A Passage to Asia: 25 Centuries of Exchange between Asia and Europe, a selection of 300 objects, including funeral urns, jewellery, semi-precious stones, gold and glass, Buddhist and Hindu images, ivory, manuscripts, textiles and archaeological finds

De Elektriciteitscentrale

Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.45

Until OCT 3 Fighting the Box: 20 Belgian Designers, 20 Stories Behind the Products, the relationship between local designers and the international industry

European Quarter

Wetstraat;
www.thehumannrightsproject.org

Until SEP 10 The Human Rights Project, outdoor exhibition of photographs of South Africa by Lukas Maximilian Hüller and Juliane R Hauser

Folklore Museum

Eikstraat 19; 02.514.53.97

www.brussels.be

Until AUG 22 Manneken-Pis: A Very European Member of Brussels, costumes from the wardrobe of the famous Brussels icon, contributed by every member of the EU

Hallepoort Museum

Zuidlaan 29; 02.533.34.51

www.kmkg-mrah.be

Until AUG 29 Brussels Calling!, works by 10 Belgian and international artists, who were all lured by the capital at one time or another

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70

www.ieselp.be

Until AUG 21 Médium, work by Belgian photographer Vincen Beeckman

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63

www.mjbj-mjb.org

Until OCT 3 Bericht aan de bevolking: De joodse geschiedenis op affiches (Message to the People: Jewish History in Posters), more than 250 documents from the museum's collection

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32

www.botanique.be

Until JUL 18 Amen, photographs of ordinary South Africans playing football and their ingenious home-made footballs by Belgian photographer Jessica Hilltout

Until AUG 8 Congo in Limbo, award-winning series by Belgian photographer Cédric Gerbehay

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33

www.legermuseum.be

Until AUG 31 Andreas Magdanz: Camp Vogelsang, large-format photos of the Rhineland training camp in North Westphalia by the German photographer

Until OCT 30 Lisolo Na Bisu (Our Story) and Tokopesa saluti (We Salute You), objects, documents photographs and audiovisual material reveal 125 years of Belgo-Congolese military relations

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11

www.fine-arts-museum.be

Until SEP 26 Charles van der Stappen (1843-1910), sculptures by the Belgian artist

Until SEP 26 Marcel Broodthaers, modern works with objects from everyday life by the late Belgian artist

Royal Museums of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11

www.kmkg-mrah.be

Until AUG 29 Isabelle de Borchgrave's I Medici: a Renaissance in Paper, life-size paper replicas of historical garments

Until AUG 29 Doorsnede (Intersection), 14 contemporary artists show their work among the museum's permanent collections

DON'T MISS

Art Festival Watou

Until 5 September

Across Watou

This annual art

parcours takes place

unexpectedly across

the rural Watou,

a town as far west

as you can go in

Flanders before

falling into France.

Poke in and out of

its churches, public

buildings and

farmhouses to find

local and international artists' multi-media installations. Site-specific performances and film screenings.

► www.watou2010.be

Dr Guislain Museum

Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95

www.museumdrguislain.be

Until SEP 12 De wereld andersom (The World Inside Out), art brut from the abcd collection in Paris, including work by Adolf Wölfli, Henry Darger and Martin Ramirez

Until SEP 12 Innocent, Yet Punished, photographs of mentally ill criminals by Ghent-based photographer Lieven Nollet

Museum of Fine Arts

Fernand Scribedreef 1 – Citadelpark; 09.240.07.00 www.mskgent.be

JUL 17-OCT 10 Stijn Cole, contemporary works by the artist in residence

Museum of Modern Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03 www.smak.be

Until AUG 22 Paolo Chiasera: Ain't No Grave Gonna Hold My Body Down, multi-media work based on concepts such as time and space by the Italian artist

Until AUG 22 Simon Gush: 4 For Four, video installation by the South African artist centred on the relationship between David Oistrakh and Sergei Prokofiev

Until DEC 3 Inside Installations, 10 installations from the museum's collection

Until OCT 3 Xanadu! The SMAK collection presented by Hans Theys</

retrospective of the late artist, a member of the Young British Artists movement

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveelmuseum
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00
www.rogerraveelmuseum.be
Until SEP 19 Biënnale van de Schilderkunst: het sublieme voorbij (Biënnale of Painting: The Sublime Past), a subjective look at painting over the last 100 years (also at Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Deurle)

WEEK IN FILM

LISA BRADSHAW

Openlucht cinema



Open-air cinema is all the rage in July and August, and with good reason. You're outside, there are often parties afterwards, and the crinkling of wrappers is so much less annoying. Plus, lots of them are free. Here are the ones on now; keep checking this space in the coming weeks for more.

Brussels

Bruxelles fait son cinéma: Unlike the rest, this open-air festival featuring films from the Mediterranean changes location, reviving the old tradition of traveling cinemas. Coming up: Italian film Giorni E Nuvole (Days and Clouds) on Antoine Gilsonplein in Watermaal-Bosvoorde and French film Joueuse (Queen to Play) on the Jamblinne de Meuxplain in Schaerbeek.

Until JUL 20

→ www.liberationfilms.be

Geraardsbergen

Openluchtcinema: Open-air cinema preceded by live concerts. Coming up: Dirk White, followed by Tim Burton's Alice in Wonderland and Feedback followed by the Flemish film Loft

Every Wednesday until AUG 18 at 20.00 on Stationsplein

→ www.openluchtcinema.be

Zeebrugge

Filmophetstrand: Three films a day on the beach – one animation, one for young people (both dubbed in Dutch) and the feature. Coming up: Asterix en de Vikingen, De Indiaan and Inglourious Basterds

Every Thursday until JUL 29 at 14.30, 16.30 and 20.00 on the Evenementenplatform

→ www.bruggeplus.be

Meise

National Botanic Garden of Belgium
Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20
www.plantentuinmeise.be
Until OCT 24 Boxes Brimming with Life, photo installations by Flemish wildlife photographer Tom Linster

Ostend

Kunstmuseum aan zee (Mu.zee)
Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18,
www.pmmk.be
Until AUG 29 Bij Ensor op Bezoek (Visiting Ensor), the world of master Flemish painter James Ensor seen through the eyes of a variety of artists, writers and filmmakers who visited him in Ostend
Until AUG 29 Louise Bourgeois, 14 works by the recently deceased French-American artist from the collection of her Ostend friend and fellow artist Xavier Tricot

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11
www.africamuseum.be
Until SEP 30 Bonjour Congo, photographs and documents from Brusselaars on the presence of the Congo in Brussels
Until JAN 9, 2011 Congo River: 4,700 Kilometres Bursting with Nature and Culture, interactive exhibition on the lifeblood of Congo, from source to mouth
Until JAN 9, 2011 100 Years in 100 Photographs, outdoor exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the African Museum building
Until JAN 9, 2011 Indépendance! Congolese Tell Their Stories of 50 Years of Independence, multi-media exhibition looks at the Democratic Republic of Congo from independence to today

Ypres

In Flanders Fields Museum
Grote Markt 34; 057.239.220
www.inflandersfields.be
Until AUG 15 Toiling for War, films, photos and objects tell the story of the presence of 140,000 Chinese workers in the Second World War
Until OCT 10 More Force Than Necessary, photos and films by Brazilian artist-in-residence Rodrigo Braga



Belgium's EU Presidency: Belgium takes the helm of the European Union Council for six months and launches a series of events to mark its presidency
Until DEC 31 across the country
www.eu2010.be

Belgium's National Day: National holiday celebrations including parades, activities by police, emergency services and armed forces, street theatre, exhibitions, concerts, children's activities and fireworks
JUL 21 across the country
www.sibp.be

Antwerp

Parkfeesten Hoboken: Free outdoor music festival every Wednesday
Until JUL 28 20.00 in Broydenborg Park, Marneflaan 3
www.hoboken.be

Bruges

Cirque Plus: Indoor and outdoor international circus festival, free of charge, plus a summer terrace
JUL 17-19 at Het Entrepot, Binnenweg 4
www.bruggeplus.be

Brussels

Apéros Urbains: Weekly aperitif plus after-parties at one of three partner

DUSK 'TIL DAWN

SAFFINA RANA

Cool by the pool

The marble-clad basement of Elsene's **Louise Gallery** is a huge club with a curious mix of art deco, great lighting and several almost-sleazy club nights with enough jailbait of both sexes to accommodate anyone harbouring a Lolita complex. Finding a swimming pool in one of its larger rooms, replete with guys in Speedos and bikini clad girls on its wooden decking last week was a surprise not completely out of context. Feel free to bring along your cozy and take a dip with clean-cut student types on 17 and 24 July from 23.00 to 6.00, while resident DJs Maestro, KC, HMD, Suncee and Samuel spin a heady party mix of Latino, house and R&B dance hits. But don't expect to actually swim. It's more of a tank than a pool; the water comes up just above waist high, and a deckside lifeguard ensures that not more than 12 (or so) clubbers get in at any one time. Everyone else dances around the edge and watches the general splashing about, particularly those sporting fake tans and gelled hair. Be warned: there don't seem to be any hygiene practices in operation, so if you find yourself with a verruca or a nasty rash the morning after, you'll know why. There are, however, plenty of podiums to dance on if you fancy showing your booty, or you can always sink into one of the faux Louis XIV throne-like sofas and sip on a very well-mixed tropical cocktail.



Louise Gallery
Louizalaan 11 (level -1)
Brussels

→ www.louisegallery.com

clubs: Fuse, K-Nal and the Vaudeville; free entrance with purchase of drink at Apéros Urbains

Until SEP 3 across the city
www.aperos.be

Bal moderne: Brussels' parks are transformed into dance floors in a series of public dances organised by Bal moderne where you can learn a new choreography in 45 minutes

JUL 18-AUG 28 across Brussels
0476.47.03.67, www.balmoderne.be

Brussels Beach: A full-fledged beach, with deck chairs, cocktails, food, water sprays, sports, circus acts, concerts, canal cruises and more

Until AUG 22 along the Akenkaai on the canal
www.brusselbad.be

Bruxellons 2010: Annual summer theatre festival with an emphasis on comedy

Until AUG 30 at Château du Karreveld, Jean de la Hoeselaan 3
02.724.24.24, www.bruxellons.net

Ecran Total: Annual summer film festival featuring more than 70 films

Until SEP 14 at Cinema Arenberg, Koninginnekergelij 26
02.512.80.63, www.arenberg.be

Festivaeria: Outdoor summer festival providing a platform for young artists with an open stage for musicians, singers, DJs, dancers, bodypainters, jugglers, photographers and street theatre artists

Until SEP 18 at Jubelpark
www.myspace.com/playnewconcept

Midi Fun Fair: Annual carnival with rides and games

JUL 17-AUG 22 from Hallepoort to the end of Zuidlaan
02.279.25.31, www.kermis-feest.be

Midis-Minimes: Lunchtime classical concerts all summer long

Until AUG 27 at Miniemerk, Miniemerstraat 62, and the Royal Conservatory, Regentschapsstraat 30
www.midis-minimes.be

Mini-Europe by Night: Sound and light show with fireworks and music 'Emotions in Europe'

JUL 17-AUG 14 22.30 at Mini-Europe, Bruparck, at the foot of the Atomium
www.minieurope.com

National Ball: National ball on the eve of Belgium's national day with music by Les Vedettes, Nicole & Hugo, Kate Ryan, and more

JUL 20 19.30 at Vossenplein
www.balnational.be

Recyclart Holidays: Free summer activities, including concerts and film screenings

Until AUG 19 at Recyclart, Station Brussel Kapellekerk, Ursulinenstraat 25
02.502.57.34, www.recyclart.be

Reggae Bus: Free Reggae, roots and dub music, entertainment and bar

JUL 17-SEP 4 15.00-23.00 at Jubelark 0499.35.23.35

Visionary Africa: Festival of literature, music, performance and exhibitions recognising the 17 African nations celebrating their 50th anniversary of independence

Until SEP 26 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23
www.bozar.be

Ghent

10 Days Off: 16th edition of the electronic music festival featuring John Digweed, Joy Orbison, Hot Chip, more

JUL 16-26 at Vooruit, St Pietersnieuwstraat 23
www.10daysoff.be

Gent Jazz Festival: Annual outdoor festival featuring Gilberto Gil, Trixie Whitley, Madness and more

Until JUL 18 18.00 at Bijloke, Godshuizenlaan
www.gentjazz.com

Gentse Feesten: 167th edition of the cultural festival combining six international festivals with free concerts, performances, a parade and more

JUL 17-26 across the city
www.gentsefeesten.be

Parkkaffee: Cultural festival in the park, with dance and theatre performances, circus and magic acts, children's entertainment, workshops, campfires, concerts, food and more

Until AUG 31 at Groenstaakstraat 37
09.227.99.94, www.parkkaffee.be

Leuven

Beleuvenissen: Outdoor music festival with free concerts every Friday night

Until JUL 30 20.30-23.30 in six locations
www.beleuvenissen.be

across the city centre
016.27.22.54, www.leuven.be

Colora Festival: World music festival featuring Bai Kamara Jr, Klezmic Zirkus, Capoeira Vida e Arte, more

Until JUL 24 in venues across the city
www.colora.org

Zomer van Sint-Pieter: Lunchtime classical concerts every weekday

Until AUG 26 at 12.15 in Sint-Pieterskerk, Grote Markt, and 30CC-Schouwburg, Bondgenotenlaan 21
www.zomer-van-sint-pieter.be

Ostend

FuZee!: Third edition of the cultural festival featuring four Saturdays of international street theatre, fire and light displays, a parade and more

Until AUG 28 on the beach
www.fuzee.be

Ostend City of Culture: Flanders' first City of Culture, a biennale designation to highlight culture in certain Flemish cities. Circus, parades, performances, exhibitions and more, all year long

Until DEC 31 across Ostend
<http://cultuur.oostende.be>

Woosha! Festival: Free outdoor music festival, with Das Pop, Laston & Geo, Samtex, Customs, Mint & Mish Mash Soundsystem and more

JUL 14-17 in Langestraat
www.woosha.be

Zomershow: Fun summer revues, with singing, dancing and comedy, for the whole family

JUL 16-AUG 28 at Casino Blankenberge, Zeedijk 150
www.zomershow.be

Peer

Blues Peer: 26th edition of the blues festival featuring Admiral Freebee, Jerry Lee Lewis, Van Morrison, more

JUL 16-18 at Festivalterrein Peer, Deusterstraat
www.brbf.be

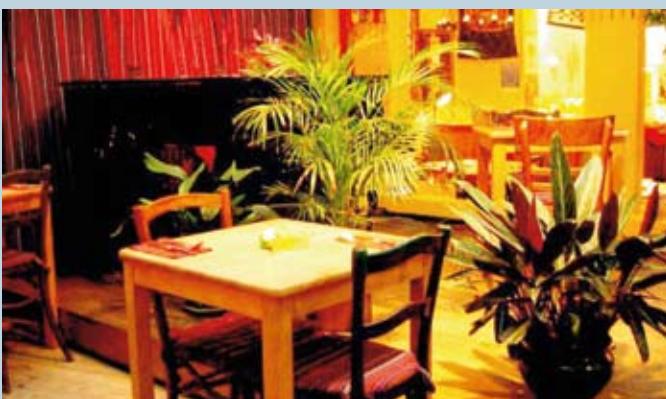
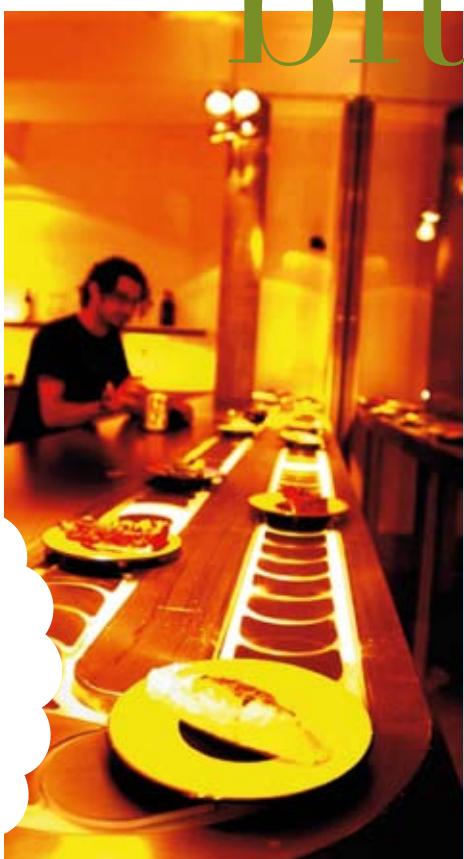
Watou

Kunstenfestival Watou: The outdoor arts parcours featuring work by more than 100 artists, writers and poets, focusing on the link between word and image

Until SEP 5 in Watou
www.watou2010.be

SHARON LIGHT

bite



Best of Brussels

Over the past year, "Bite" has taken me across Flanders to explore new gastronomic territory. Sadly, as I prepare for an impending move back to the USA, it is drawing to a close.

Writing this column pushed me to visit parts of Flanders I had never seen and to get to know cities beyond a cursory tourist visit. I've met interesting people, discovered unusual shops and products and been constantly impressed by the quality of culinary life in this region of Europe. I also discovered new things about my current hometown of Brussels, as I tried to present a diversity of world cuisine or find that off-the-beaten-track surprise.

But there are plenty of meals that I eat in Brussels that haven't made it into Bite. These are my "go to" restaurants, the old standbys that guarantee a good meal when meeting up with friends, or where I can go to unwind when I can't face my kitchen at the end of the day. So, before I leave, here is a quick round-up of some of my fave Brussels eateries.

Cosi Com'è This Italian joint in Vorst was recommended to me by a Belgian friend as "the best pizza in Brussels". The thin crusts and fresh toppings have never let me down. Their pasta selection is equally impressive; the day's offerings are displayed in a case for your perusal and drooling. The service is slow but worth the wait.

Hoogte Honderdplein 3

Nea Genia Greek food, tapas style. I can't say enough good things about this place in Elsene, from the meltingly soft eggplant topped with enough garlic to scare off a vampire, to the fried anchovies that will make even a sceptic into a lover of these salty, little fish. The biggest challenge is narrowing down your order to only three per person. There's a nice list of Greek wines, but I opt for their smooth Ouzo. *Waterloosesteenweg 437*

Although your Bite correspondent is packing up her chocolates and witloof and setting sail for the US, Bite itself will be back next week

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #139

Feature

Find out how our reporter's visit to the Brussels' Institute of Art Heritage inspired her to track down the origin of several perfectly restored skulls wrapped in cloth

Living

An exhibition in Ostend celebrates the 125th anniversary of the tram line that hugs 67 kilometres of the Belgian coast, also the world's longest

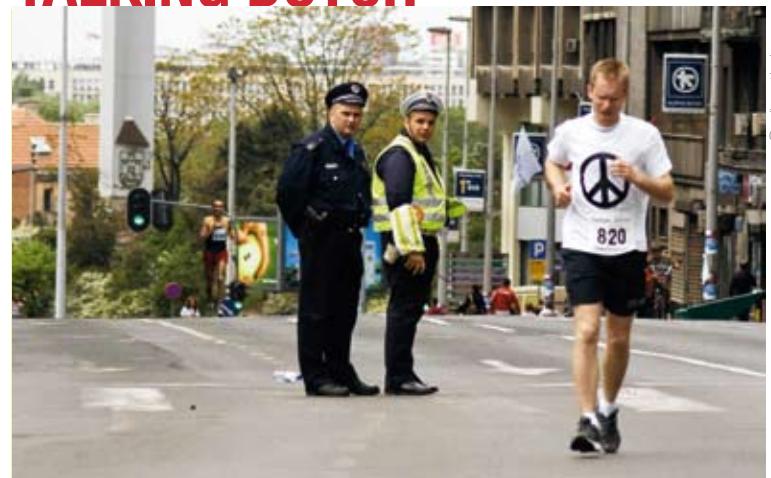
Active

The fifth and final part in the castle walking series will take us to the lovely green oasis of Beersel, just 10 kilometres southwest of Brussels

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN

© elcoothensare



• bewegen •

When some people get the bit between their teeth, there's no putting them off. Take John Francis, who gave up speaking for 14 years in protest at the damage caused by oil spills. He said he just wanted to do it for one day but found that for the first time he was listening to what people were saying, and so he held his tongue.

The same cannot be said about *Gentenaar* Stefaan Engels because he knew before he started what he was letting himself in for. Stefaan is an experienced marathon and triathlon athlete in his 40s. On 1 January, he announced "*Ik ga voor 365 marathons en u?*" I'm going for 365 marathons and you? Well, he set off that day round the Watersportbaan in Ghent, which is a large recreation area. About four laps is 42 and a bit kilometres, a marathon.

He kept this up for a couple of weeks until he suffered a muscle injury. That was the end of that, you might think. But he astounded his supporters by saying: "*Ik zet de teller op nul* – I am putting the counter back to zero."

When he hears himself described as *zo zot als een achterdeur* – as daft as a brush ("back door"), he agrees that people may be right. But who is the craziest: *ik of zij die elke avond voor de TV hangen*?

– me or them lounging in front of the TV every evening?

For variety's sake, he runs at several locations to publicise his *Feel Good Tour*. He is also doing all official marathons in Belgium as well as the half marathons, which he does twice! On top of that, he is including some foreign runs around Europe.

And now in July, he's still at it; he'll have done more than 150 by the time you read this. In this heat, he does take on a lot of water: "*Gemiddeld verbruik ik 20 liter per dag*" and that's just on average! Same with salt. Not surprisingly, Stefaan keeps out of the heat for the rest of the day: "*Terrasjes doen na mijn marathon, zit er voorlopig niet in* – sitting on café terraces isn't possible for the moment".

What drives him? Well, in his own words, as an asthmatic kid he was continually told by his father that he could do nothing. Stefaan wants others to believe that they can achieve: "*Ik wil mensen aanzetten tot bewegen* – I want to encourage people to move."

All this requires planning, which Stefaan organises through his company Phidippides NV, named after the messenger who brought the news of the Battle of Marathon to Athens. Unlike his predecessor, Stefaan doesn't look like dropping yet.

→ www.marathonman365.be

THE LAST WORD . . .

Hotting up

"Our drivers are not permitted to get into disputes with the competition. Perhaps they should all have an ice-lolly to cool down."

Manager of Joris Ijs, whose van drivers have been involved in an ice cream war

Moving up

"It's wonderful living here, the peace and quiet is priceless. But if I had her fortune I'd buy a place by the water."

Sylvia Campbell of Oud Turnhout, on hearing that Athina Onassis, granddaughter of Aristotle, has just bought a villa

Dutch pride

"Football for the Dutch is a very serious matter. They deal with it differently from us, whether it's winning or losing. Football is like 90 minutes of acceptable nationalism."

Jeroen Scheerder, professor of sports management at Leuven University, commenting on the World Cup final in which the Netherlands lost

Stepping down

"I always say that a Brusselleer who hasn't seen a Toone show has a gap in his culture."

José Géral (Toone VII), director of the Toone puppet theatre, who is passing on the business to his son Nicolas